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PM/WRA FOR KATHERINE BAKER, EUR/NCE FOR SAM SADLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2017

TAGS: MOPS PARM PREL NATO SI

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA IN CAUTIOUS, LISTENING MODE ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS ISSUES

REF: SECSTATE 6667

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) PolMilOff met with MFA Security Policy Department staffer Bostjan Jerman on January 22 to discuss reftel demarche and ascertain the Government of Slovenia's (GoS) positions on cluster munitions policy and the upcoming conference hosted by the Government of Norway on February 22 and 23 in Oslo. Jerman, who was well versed on the conference and the issues, acknowledged that an invitation had been received to the conference, and said that after considerable discussion with the Ministry of Defense, the GoS would be sending a delegation of two or three working level experts, but would not attend at a higher level. He said that the GoS is open to hearing what the Government of Norway has to say on the issue, that any international approach should be practical and comprehensive, and agreed that an "Oslo process" was probably not ideal to meeting those standards. Jerman made clear that Slovenia would continue to follow progress in discussions about the issue within the context of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) and plans to attend both the International Committee for the Red Cross meetings in April and the next meeting of ongoing CCW discussions in June (though he was less than optimistic that the CCW would move forward on anything in a timely fashion).

¶2. (C) Jerman, who commented that this must be a "lobbying visit" at the onset of the meeting, said that cluster munitions were important to Slovenia for two reasons: (1) because they are a humanitarian issue, and (2) because they are part of the platform of the EU Presidency Troika of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia which will hold the presidency successively throughout 2007 and in the first half of 2008. He said that Slovenia's actions related to cluster munitions will likely follow closely the actions of its two Troika partners who will hold the presidency in 2007 before Slovenia takes it in January 2008.

¶3. (C) Jerman made it explicit that the Slovenian Armed Forces "do not possess nor do they hope to possess cluster munitions," and pointed out that Slovenia was the victim of at least one cluster munitions bombing during its ten day war for independence in 1991. He said he was aware of efforts by cluster munitions manufacturers to provide ammunition with self-destruction mechanisms but that even with this, cluster munitions still pose a serious humanitarian risk in the eyes of the GoS. Jerman wanted to make clear that the GoS would look at all negotiations through the lens of NATO cooperation, and that they would search for a solution that did not conflict with Slovenia's ongoing commitment to NATO and the unity of the alliance. He likened the situation to

that of the landmine treaty, saying that Slovenia's participation in that had not affected GoS contributions to NATO campaigns in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Kosovo and that any participation in a cluster munitions effort would likely have the same result. Jerman concluded by saying that the GoS would be open to further discussions on the issue in all settings, including pol-mil and mil-mil.

ROBERTSON